THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The Justice Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry for Inquiry into the Alleged Disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, during its visit to the Russian Federation from 20 to 30 September 2005, visited the following archives:

(i) Russian State Archive for Social and Political History, Moscow

(ii) Russian State Archive for Audio Documents, Moscow

(iii) Russian State Naval Archive, St. Petersburg

(iv) Central State Archive, St. Petersburg

(v) State Archive, Omsk Region

(vi) State Archive, Irkutsk Region, and

(vii) Private Archives of Prof. Eva Ya. Luisternik at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow.

2. According to the Russian legislation (Archive Law of 2004), which is applicable not only to representatives of foreign countries but also Russian citizens, access to classified archives, without any exception, is given only to a strictly defined category of officials.

3. Despite the above Law, taking into consideration the interest of the Indian side, the Russian Government had competent authorities conduct a detailed study of these archives and copies of all documents found with the name of S.C. Bose, had been handed over to the Indian side. These, in turn, have been given to the Justice Mukherjee Commission.

Pendency of Passport applications in Kerala

1715. PROF. P.J. KURIAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Passport applications pending in Kerala as on date;

(b) the average time taken to issue a Passport after submitting the applications; and

(c) the steps taken to reduce this time period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The number of Applications pending after receipt

of clear police verification reports as on date at Passport Offices in Kerala (Kozhikode, Cochin & Trivandrum) are 55, 996 (Fifty five thousand nine hundred and ninety six).

(b) The average time taken to issue a fresh passport in these offices is approximately 40-45 days. However, passports under Tatkal scheme are being issued within 3 days; passports of minors issued within 15 days and renewal/reissue passports within 30 days.

(c) The pendancy is largely due to short supply of blank passport booklets from the Indian Security Press, Nashik. The matter is being followed up with the concerned authorities. As soon as normalcy is restored in respect of supply of blank passport booklets, steps like working in shifts, will be taken to bring back the pendancy position to the barest minimum possible.

Discussion on Iran with US President

1716. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that issue of Iran nuclear was discussed with US President during Prime Minister's visit there in September, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what has been India's stand thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Iran's nuclear issue came up for discussion with the US President during Prime Minister's recent visit to New York in September, 2005.

(b) Prime Minister and US President exchanged views on the issue of Iran's nuclear programme and the consultations in progress at the IAEA in Vienna at that time. The Prime Minister conveyed the importance of engaging in intensive diplomatic efforts to evolve an international consensus on this issue.

(c) India's stand remains unchanged on this issue. India continues to believe that a way could be found to reconcile Iran's need for nuclear energy for its development with the international community's concern over proliferation. India supports keeping the door open for dialogue and consensus and avoidance of confrontation. India is opposed to the matter